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## CROP OUTLOOK FOR EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION

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European crop conditions, as of mid-May, continue to point to a total crop production below that of the favorable 1948 season but considerably above that of the drought year 1947, according to the monthly survey of the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

General rains in late April and the first half of May benefited crops materially but in a few areas of southern Europe they did not occur until after some crop deterioration had taken place and in others did not fully offset the dry winter and early spring.

In northern and western Europe the condition of crops generally continues excellent but some reduction in the grain acreage has occurred in the United Kingdom and Ireland and conditions in France are less favorable, particularly for coarse grains, than they were a year ago. This may result in a slight reduction in crops in this area compared with 1948.

In central Europe, crop conditions generally are below a year ago because of less than average rainfall. In western Germany a decline in breadgrain production is expected because of unfavorable weather and some shift to coarse grains. Southern European countries report that there was considerable deterioration of crops before the April rains and production prospects, especially for winter grain were reduced.

Dry weather during the fall and early spring has hindered plantings and retarded crop growth in eastern European countries except Hungary, where conditions were much better than a year ago and larger acreages have been seeded. On the other hand in the Soviet Union spring planting is progressing well and winter grains are in good condition. Inadequacy of subsoil moisture is still a common complaint over most of southern and eastern Europe.

Several of the larger grain-producing countries are reporting a breadgrain acreage no larger and in some case somewhat smaller than in 1948, while only a few of the smaller countries show some expansion of wheat and rye acreage. As a result, there appears to be a decline in the total breadgrain acreage. The acreage of coarse grain on the other

hand may increase. Some decline in the potato acreage may be offset by an increase in the acreage of sugar beets. Several countries also have reported some increase in the acreage planted to oilseed crops and winter damage to such crops was slight. Pasture conditions in northern and western Europe are generally reported in very good condition but in other parts the low winter and spring rainfall has reduced pasture and hay crops.

Except for heavy frost damage in Belgium and Luxembourg, fruit prospects are reported good to excellent, particularly in eastern Europe.

#### SUMMARY OF EUROPEAN CROP OUTLOOK BY COUNTRIES

##### WESTERN EUROPE

United Kingdom: On the whole, the weather this crop season has been favorable to agriculture, both for getting field work done and for crop growth. Winter precipitation was below average but without adverse effects. In mid-May rains came just when lack of moisture was causing concern, but much more rain is needed. In general, crops are in good condition.

Wheat area of 1,923,000 acres in England and Wales is below the target of 2,340,000 and below last year's 2,188,000 acres. Coarse-grain acreage is about the same as in 1948; and a decline in the potato acreage more than offsets the increase in other root crops.

Ireland: As of the middle of May, Ireland was having warm, sunny weather. In western and southern Ireland, precipitation was currently about normal and crops were in good condition. In some areas early potatoes had suffered from frost. Crop conditions on the whole were continuing favorable though precipitation was slightly below normal to date. A decline in total area in grains is due to termination of compulsory tillage.

The Netherlands: Favorable spring weather and crop conditions were continuing in early May. Crops were well advanced. The breadgrain area is estimated about 5 percent above 1948, but this increase is about offset by declines in the coarse-grain acreage. The potato area has decreased from 550,000 to 470,000 acres. The sugarbeet area has increased from 116,000 to 165,000 acres.

Belgium and Luxembourg: Crops are in good condition. Fall-sown crops came through the winter in excellent shape. Spring weather was favorable for field work and planting. March and April rainfall were normal, but subsoil moisture remained low. Pastures at the beginning of May were better than average. May showers have been very welcome. Early May frosts caused some damage to prospective grape, apple, and pear crops.

Plantings of winter wheat in Belgium are about 10 percent greater than in 1948, and winter rye and coarse-grain plantings are up about 16 percent. Spring planting of grain is expected to be about the same as in 1948.

France: Rainfall during the early part of May was slight in the northern and western parts, but good in the central-eastern and southeastern regions.

Total grain acreage was estimated on May 1 as less than 1 percent below that of the same date a year ago, with no significant shifts between breadgrains and coarse grains. Official sources forecast the wheat crop only moderately smaller than the large crop of last year, but condition of other cereal crops is said to be somewhat less favorable.

Area estimates for oilseeds as of May 1 are significantly higher than a year earlier. First cuttings of hay are expected to be below normal.

Prospects for the cereals harvest in French North Africa are reported to be excellent.

#### NORTHERN EUROPE

Denmark: As of the middle of May, crops and pastures were in excellent condition. Precipitation during April was well above normal and made moisture conditions excellent. Crop and growing conditions for the season as a whole have been considerably better than normal. Fall-sown crops came through the winter with an excellent stand, and spring seeding was completed in time to benefit by April's ideal growing weather.

Fall-sown wheat and rye acreages are greater than last year. There are 200,000 acres of fall-sown wheat as compared with 156,000 a year ago. Fall-sown rye totals 452,000 acres; last year the figure was 405,000.

Sweden: Prospects in May are for an above-normal crop. April precipitation 25 percent above normal made soil moisture excellent in all areas except southeastern Sweden. Spring work was progressing well.

The area in oilseed crops increased substantially to 316,000 acres as compared with 198,000 in 1948. Breadgrain and potato acreage has been reduced about 10 percent from last year, and for other crops little change is anticipated relative to 1948.

Norway: Spring weather was favorable for field work and spring planting is expected to include a larger area this year. There are slightly increased fertilizer and seed stocks available compared to last year, but shortages of labor, transportation, and machinery continue unchanged.

#### CENTRAL EUROPE

German Bizon: Total grain acreage is about 1 percent less than last year, with some shift from breadgrains to coarse grains. Although rainfall during the early part of May was satisfactory, there will probably be a significant drop in breadgrains production as compared with last year, when yields were excellent.

Austria: The condition of winter wheat and rye remains good. Planting of spring grains and potatoes has progressed well. Sugar beet planting is also in progress, but there are indications that the acreage goal may not be reached. Winterkill of rape is reported insignificant. No frost damage of consequence to fruit blossoming has been reported.

Switzerland: Spring sowing has ended under favorable conditions. Crop and pasture prospects are good.

Poland: Recent rains benefited crops after some dryness. Spring plowing and planting have been progressing favorably.

#### SOUTHERN EUROPE

Portugal: April rains appreciably improved cereal crops on good lands, but were not extensive enough to provide general improvement. Crop estimates have been revised slightly upward and indicate a better output than in 1948, when yields were poor. Prospects for the production of wine and olive oil are stated to be good.

Spain: Showers beginning at the end of April gave some relief, but were insufficient to give hope for a real improvement in the crop outlook. Latest official estimates now place barley and oats production at only 55 percent of last year and wheat production at 75 percent.

Italy: A month of severe drought, accompanied by deterioration of the grain crop, was broken in Italy on April 25, when scattered rains began to relieve the situation in many sections.

While the spring drought probably had some detrimental effect on wheat yields, the advent of rain at the critical time saved the major part of the wheat area from disaster. Forage production, however, is already hard-hit, and will definitely be less than last year.

Improved moisture conditions left the ground in fairly good shape for corn planting, though corn acreage may be below earlier expectations.

#### SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

Bulgaria: Spring sowing, which had been substantially behind schedule, was nearing completion by May 18th. Winter grain production expected to be less than last year because dry fall conditions resulted in reduced acreage and unfavorable early spring retarded development of crop. Rainfall generally throughout the country during the week of May 10-17 created very favorable conditions for crop development. However, there is still insufficient moisture in the northeastern and southeastern parts of the country, where the greatest drought occurred.

Hungary: Largely because of increased acreage and a relatively mild winter, a better-than-average production of winter grains is expected. Abundant harvests of orchard fruits are indicated. Growth of winter crops and seeding of spring grains were favored by good rains during the second half of March followed by considerable precipitation in April. More than 35 percent of all spring-crop acreage was reported planted by April 22 and weather conditions have favored germination and early growth.

Rumania: In spite of the fact that acreage seeded to winter grain is reported to be slightly above that of 1948, the production will probably be considerably less because of insufficient moisture supply.

Much of the grain did not germinate until late April, at which time only 68 percent of the planned spring acreage had been seeded. Warm weather during the latter half of April favored the prospects of a good fruit crop.

Yugoslavia: The outlook for winter grain indicates a probable less-than-normal crop, as dry weather in the fall resulted in generally decreased acreage and early spring drought caused some deterioration of fall sown crops in some areas. Frequent rains in late April and May, however, have improved condition of winter crops and provided adequate moisture for spring farming operations. Indications point to an excellent fruit crop.

#### SOVIET UNION

Despite the delayed spring which was too dry in some regions and too wet in others, sowing on the whole proceeded more rapidly than last year. Sowings, however, have been lagging in a number of central and eastern regions. The southern regions were approaching the end of the sowing campaign in the middle of May. The Southern Ukraine was completing the planting of corn. More than 90 percent of the sugar beet acreage was planted by May 10. The principal cotton-growing regions completed the planting of cotton by the middle of the month. At the same time, small grains were being seeded in the more northern regions. There have been the usual complaints in the Soviet press about the spotty character of the field work, which may have been caused by the very speed of sowing, but an improvement as compared with the preceding years was indicated. Over 500,000 acres of tree shelterbelts were planted in the steppe and wooded-steppe regions, and the goal was exceeded by 11 percent.

The conditions of wintergrain (wheat and rye\*) was reported to be mostly excellent or good. There were favorable condition reports from such important winter-wheat regions as Ukraine and North Caucasus. The winter wheat was aided by good care and, particularly, by supplementary fertilization on a large area in the spring. Late April rains improved the condition of winter grain which did not winter well in parts of the Lower Volga region.

Rains in the middle of May in a number of northwestern and north-central regions and in northern Ukraine had a beneficial effect on growing crops. Weather conditions have been favorable to the growth of weeds, requiring considerable effort in weeding of fields.

